

**DRAFT
FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT
(FONSI)**

**PIGGOTT RELIEF WELLS – TEST REACH
CLAY COUNTY, ARKANSAS**

The Memphis District has completed the final design for a test reach of seepage control measures in the Piggott sub-area of the St. Francis River that was included in the General Design Memorandum 104, Supplement No. 3, dated November 1987. As presented in the General Design Memorandum 104, Supplement No. 3, the initial plan was for the construction of a 15 mile long, 0.5 year frequency, seepage interceptor channel designed to maintain a 5-foot water table within the Piggott sub-area (between levee miles 7.2 and 23.0) as a pilot project with implementation of future improvements to be dependent on its operational success. After detailed design and consultation with local interests, the amount of agricultural land that would have been taken out of production to accommodate the interceptor channel resulted in opposition to the project. Consequently, an updated seepage study was completed in April 2004 and recommended that a 2-mile long test reach of wells be constructed to evaluate the effectiveness of relief wells in the study area. Seventy-six 8 and 10-inch diameter relief wells will be placed landside of the St. Francis River Levee between St. Francis River Levee Miles 15/52+00 and 17/44+00. Additionally, an existing landside ditch located approximately 100 feet from the levee toe will be cleaned out and extended to act as a collector ditch for the relief well flows. The excavated material from the collector ditch cleanout and extension will be spread on the open field on the levee side of the ditch. Approximately, 12,065 feet of an existing drainage ditch will also be cleaned out and enlarged to convey the excess seepage water from the collector ditch to Mayo Ditch. The excavated material from the outlet ditch will be spread on existing spoil adjacent to the site. Excavation in all areas will be limited to the extent practical and seeded with a grass cover.

An environmental assessment was prepared to specifically address the potential impacts of this work on the cultural and natural resources, including endangered species, water quality, wildlife habitat, and the human environment. Most of the land within the vicinity of the project area is in row crop production. Some agricultural land may be eliminated due to the extension of the collector ditch and the enlargement of the outlet ditch. However, the relief wells will provide the agricultural fields in the immediate vicinity of the wells with relief from high groundwater levels. All growth, stumps, brush, partially buried logs, abandoned pilings and other projections will be removed from the collector and outlet ditch channels. Excavated material will be placed in non-wet agricultural land or on existing spoil adjacent to the ditches.

Coordination with the Natural Resources Conservation Service revealed that there was no evidence of farmed wetlands, prime farmland, or unique farmland in the project area. There will be no deposition of material into any wetlands or other waters of the U.S. Thus, a section 404 (b) 1 permit and water quality certification are not required. No significant impacts to water quality should occur as a result of the project. Corps of

Engineers biologists conducted an endangered and threatened species survey of the project area, and no endangered or threatened species (or critical habitat) were found. Coordination with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife service revealed that no impacts to threatened or endangered species should occur due to the proposed relief well installation and ditch work. Site investigations and record searches indicate that no known or potential hazardous, toxic, or radioactive wastes are present in the project area.

An intensive cultural resources survey has been completed for the proposed project area, and the results of the survey were sent to the SHPO and Federally recognized tribes. The SHPO determined that no known historic properties would be affected by the project. Any significant cultural resources inadvertently discovered later during project construction would be fully treated under provisions of the National Historic Preservation Act.

After review of the documentation of environmental impacts associated with the construction of this project, I have determined that this project is not a major federal action significantly affecting the human environment. Therefore, I have determined that an environmental impact statement is not required.

Date

Charles O. Smithers III
Colonel, Corps of Engineers
District Engineer